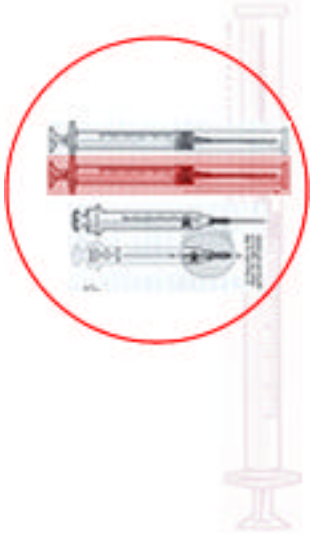
NIOSH recommends that health care facilities use safer medical devices to protect workers from needlestick and other sharps injuries. Since the passage of the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act in 2000 and the subsequent revision of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, all health care facilities are required to use safer medical devices.

SAFER MEDICAL DEVICE IMPLEMENTATION IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

SHARING LESSONS LEARNED

NIOSH has asked a small number of health care facilities to share their experiences on how they implemented safer medical devices in their settings. These facilities have agreed to describe how each step was accomplished, and also to discuss the barriers they encountered and how they were resolved, and most importantly, lessons learned.



Phase 3: Identify and Screen Safer Medical Devices

Our facility is a privately owned dental practice. We specialize in the care and treatment of pediatric and handicapped patients. We currently operate two offices, and employ approximately 30 people. Many of our staff members are part-time employees filling positions of associate dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants and administrative staff. We are just beginning the process of selecting and evaluating safer medical devices.

Identifying Devices

Our process for identifying safer medical devices started with the most readily available sources. Our purchasing agent began by reviewing dental supply catalogs and speaking with our sales representative(s). When these sources provided us with minimal options we began a more extensive review utilizing dental periodicals, Internet sites and even contacting medical/dental supply companies directly. The February 2002 issue of Dental Products Report (dentalproducts.net) proved to be an excellent reference source. The Infection Control Report entitled "Choosing and Using Sharps Safety Devices" reviewed the new OSHA regulations, introduced available products, provided sample evaluation criteria and listed several useful Internet sites.

Examining Devices

Despite our extensive search for safety devices, we found only two available on the market for consideration in the dental office related to administration of local anesthetic. Anesthetic devices were identified as the top priority for implementing safety devices. Therefore, we proceeded with the selection process despite the limited product. The sharps prevention team then met to screen the devices. The screening form attached was developed beforehand with the input of all team members. In order to enhance our screening of available devices, we coordinated the meeting time with the sales representative for an educational introduction to one of the new devices. The purchasing agent/dental assistant researched the proper handling of the second safety device and presented it to the team during the same meeting. Of course, there was question and answer time allotted after each presentation. The team then "walked through" the screening form for each of the devices to be considered and responded to each of the questions making specific notations when appropriate. After completing and reviewing the screening forms, the team selected the device(s) to be evaluated by the staff at our facility.

Lessons Learned

Having the device screening and evaluation forms completed with input from all of the team members was very beneficial to this process. The varying perspectives developed more comprehensive criteria tailored to the needs of our

specialty practice. The NIOSH sample screening form proved to be a useful resource. Ultimately, our facility used this sample form as a template in development of our screening form. Utilizing the availability of a sales representative worked well for us and was easily done. However, scheduling may have been more of an issue if there were multiple devices to be evaluated. If there were several product representatives willing to meet with us, we may have found the need to meet on several occasions and screen a limited number of devices at each of the meetings.

Staff Hours:

Type of Staff	Hours Spent on Phase
Management (practice owner)	3
Administrative (non-clinical duties)	20
Front-line (clinical input)	4
Total	27

Other, non-labor items:

1. Printing/copying of materials
2. Meeting facility space
3. Lunch provided during working session
4. Safety devices to be evaluated

SCREENING FORM
DENTAL SAFETY SYRINGES AND NEEDLES

Date:_____

Product name/ brand/ company:_____

Clinical Considerations	Acceptable	Not Applicable	Unacceptable
1. Device permits the exchange of cartridges during tx on the same pt.	Y	N/A	N
2. Device permits the exchange of needles during tx on the same pt.	Y	N/A	N
3. The needle is compatible with a reusable syringe.	Y	N/A	N
4. The device permits multiple injections on the same patient.	Y	N/A	N
5. The weight and size of the device is acceptable.	Y	N/A	N
6. The size and configuration of the device permits a clear view of the injection site and the needle tip.	Y	N/A	N
7. The size and configuration of the device permits access to all areas of the mouth and is acceptable for pediatric use.	Y	N/A	N
8. The device allows a clear view of the cartridge contents.	Y	N/A	N
9. No excessive force is required to activate or control the plunger.	Y	N/A	N

Safety Feature Considerations	Acceptable	Not Applicable	Unacceptable
1. The clinician's hands can remain behind the sharp during activation of the safety feature.	Y	N/A	N
2. The safety feature is easy to recognize and use.	Y	N/A	N
3. The safety feature can be activated with one hand.	Y	N/A	N
4. The safety feature provides a temporary means of protecting the needle between uses.	Y	N/A	N
5. The safety feature can be deactivated for repeated use with the same pt.	Y	N/A	N
6. The safety feature can not be accidentally deactivated during normal use.	Y	N/A	N

General Product Considerations	Acceptable	Not Applicable	Unacceptable
1. The product is readily available.	Y	N/A	N
2. The product is packaged conveniently.	Y	N/A	N
3. The product can be safely disposed of using current sharps containers.	Y	N/A	N
4. The product and its safety features are easy to use.	Y	N/A	N
5. The product is reasonably priced in comparison to other available safety devices.	Y	N/A	N

This device should be considered for further clinical evaluation. Y N

Additional comments:_____
_____
_____
_____